



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**  
**KICKS OFF INVEST LA**  
**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FORUMS**  
**IN SAN FERNANDO & SANTA CLARITA VALLEYS**

*First of seven community forums to bring together youth in foster care, advocates, law enforcement, school officials, faith leaders, foster parents, parents, and others to strengthen partnerships that improve child and family safety and wellbeing.*

**LOS ANGELES (Feb. 21, 2020)** The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) launched the first in a series of Community Engagement Forums to engage, connect and support families in Los Angeles County. Taking place in the San Fernando and Santa Clarita Valleys, this Forum is the first of seven Countywide community forums.

Invest LA is a new strategic foundation that prioritizes co-designing a shared vision of success with the community to enhance child safety and strengthen families. An essential component includes the Community Engagement Forums to unite community stakeholders, advocacy groups, faith-based community groups, immigrant rights advocates, and many others who share the goal of protecting children and serving families.

**Invest LA** is centered on three priority investment areas: Strengthening Children, Youth and Families, Workforce Excellence, and Community and Cross-Sector Partnership. The work in each of these areas will be guided by five foundational pillars that are crucial to a successful child welfare system.

“Our goal with Invest LA is to ensure that stakeholders from unique and diverse communities across Los Angeles County have the opportunity to have a say and exchange information to develop solutions that tangibly improve the lives of the most vulnerable children and families,” said **DCFS Director Bobby D. Cagle**.

“Protecting vulnerable children and uplifting families in crisis is a job DCFS cannot do alone; to be successful, we must collaborate with partners in the community including law enforcement, schools, families, foster parents, faith-leaders and more. **Invest LA** is putting a focus on strengthening these



partnerships and to brainstorm without limits what we can do together to help children and families in Los Angeles County thrive,” Cagle continued.

The Forum in the San Fernando and Santa Clarita Valleys spans two days, February 20 and 21, and is structured for DCFS leadership and its partners to have intimate, candid conversations. The goal is for each stakeholder session to discuss, brainstorm, and identify new ways of approaching and meeting the needs of children and families that will enhance their safety, strengthen families, and promote measurable, positive outcomes.

*Invest LA*’s five foundational pillars include:

1. **Prevention and Aftercare:** We believe that that preventing traumatic experiences for children is the best approach and can be accomplished by strengthening the protective capacity of the family, surrounding that family with supports that address its current needs, e.g., housing, food, therapy, parenting classes, and community connection.
2. **Shared Practice Model:** We believe that child welfare should put the family in need at the center of the conversation, empowering them to develop and execute plans for their own wellbeing working with DCFS. Instead of telling families what they need, we center their experiences and listen to what they think they need for support.
3. **Brain Science:** Taking a trauma-informed approach to supporting families helps us better serve them and meet their needs.
4. **Establishing a Safety Culture:** Reframing the culture at DCFS to one of safety and shifting from blame to accountability that also fosters open communication based on trust.
5. **Culture of Equity:** Promoting policy and practice that is just and fair to everyone, recognizing the negative impacts of discrimination.

The Department will host seven *Invest LA* community forums in each of the County’s Service Planning Areas through 2021 to co-design with the community a strategic foundation to move the needle on outcomes that demonstrate children are safer, families are healthier, and communities are supportive places for families to thrive.

View our Invest LA stories and posts on   [@lacountydcfs](https://www.facebook.com/lacountydcfs).



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**About the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)**

The Los Angeles Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) promotes child safety and well-being by partnering with communities to strengthen families, keeping children at home whenever possible, and connecting them with stable, loving homes in times of need. As the largest child protective services agency in the nation, DCFS is responsible for ensuring the safety of more than two million children across 88 diverse cities in Los Angeles County. Established in 1984 to keep children safe and support families in crisis, it is one of the 35 Los Angeles County Departments governed by the five-member Board of Supervisors with nearly 9,000 staff across 20 regional offices, specialized bureaus, and administration that cover a broad array of services and programs. The department is led by Director Bobby D. Cagle - a former foster child and longtime social worker. For more information, visit <http://dcfs.lacounty.gov>.